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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, February 7, 1935.

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SUBJECT: "WHY CLOTHES WEAR OUT." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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Unreliable or badly treated clothes can play havoc with the best of budgets. Think, for example, of that careful spending-and-saving plan you probably have all worked out on paper for the coming year, listing just the items of clothing you'll need in 1935, and how much you'll allow for each item. Now, all will go well with that budget, if you give your clothes good care, and if you buy the kind of garments that will last. But if you happen to choose a dress, or hose, or underwear that goes to pieces in a short time -- well, then it's all up with your budget.

I don't need to tell you that clothes are one of the items of considerable expense to most woemn. And I don't need to tell you that one of the saddest experiences in any woman's life is an attractive garment that she had counted on and that goes back on her. I'm referring to this only because our friends the clothing specialists say that this kind of disappointment and waste of money isn't necessary -- not if you understand what makes clothes unreliable and how to avoid those that are likely to disappoint. Also, of course, you need to know how to care for clothes to save them.

What makes clothes wear out? Well, the experts at the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington, D. C., will answer that question in just four words. They'll say: "Fabric, fit, construction and care." Fabric, fit, construction and care. A dress made of fabric that will wear well; a dress that fits you -- no pulling or drawing anywhere; a dress that is made well -- seams, hems, finishes and so on -- that dress will give you good service if you give it good care.

Let's take up this matter of fabric first. Many dresses wear out because the fabric isn't suited to its job. We've often mentioned heavily weighted silk and how soon it wears out. If you want your dress to last awhile, you won't make it of silk that has much weighting even if that silk looks nice on the bargain counter and doesn't cost much. And before you buy a dress, you'll inquire at the store whether the silk fabric is weighted.

The specialists showed me one example of a garment that gave out early in its life because of wrong fabric. This was a satin underslip that wore out in a very short time. It was a "slip" in more ways than one, so they told me. At the back of the skirt threads that ran in one direction began slipping on first wearing. The trouble was that the fabric didn't have an even, balanced weave, so the threads were able to slide and shift. In a short time certain

places in the skirt had threads running in only one direction and these shortly broke through. Any shifty material will behave this way at seams, or across seat of skirt, or at waist. This frequently happens on underslips and on certain kinds of slippery rayon dresses.

In general, firm, even, balanced weaves wear best in any fiber -- wool, silk, cotton, or linen.

Well, there are examples of fabric that makes clothes wear out. Now about fit. A dress that doesn't fit the wearer often gives out from strain. Suppose it is too tight across the back of the waist. Sooner or later it will give way at this point. Suppose the armholes are cut wrong so that they draw. More strain and a shorter life for the dress at this point. Too close a fit at elbow or at the hip line, or not enough room in the skirt to step out comfortably -- these also end the days of many a dress. This matter of fit is the reason that the specialists urge you to cut your pattern out on cheap muslin material first. Then baste, and try it on, and fit it before you cut into the dress material. "Try, and fit, and try again," they say. This will not only mean a better looking dress but also one that will wear longer. And when you buy a ready-made garment, again watch the fit. Look out for skimp-cut in bargain dresses. Before you buy, try walking and sitting as well as standing in that dress. Be sure armholes, waist -- back and front, hip line and hem line are all roomy enough.

So much for fabric and fit. Now an illustration or two about construction. Be sure the seams you make are going to be strong enough to stand up under the wear they'll get. Speaking of slips again, I saw a silk bias underslip that had pulled out along the skirt seam. That closely fitted garment needed firm flat side seams but it had been made with just plain seams with rough edges. The same slip had come to disaster from its straps. Shoulder straps have a lot of strain put on them and therefore need firm anchorage. But these straps had been joined to the lace, rather than to the top of the garment. Of course, they tore the lace in no time. In children's garments loosely worked buttonholes that soon pull out are a frequent cause of trouble. Children's clothes get lots of wear so need sturdy construction. Before you buy, look at placket ends, pocket corners and button reinforcements as well as buttonholes. In adult garments examine seams, the way lace and other decorations are put on, buckles and other accessories.

Fabric, fit, construction -- and care. Well, the chief point to make about care is that regular cleaning prolongs the life of all clothes. Dust, grime, spots and stains -- these help damage clothing. So brush wool, fur, and leather garments frequently. Take out all spots as soon as possible. And see that clothes have regular washing or cleaning. Keep coats and dresses on hangers in a clean, airy closet. You won't use a brush on silks, but they'll profit by brushing with a Turkish towel now and then. Knitted garments are the exception to the hanging rule. They should be folded and lie flat when not in use.